

## Top Ten Deck Questions

**Do I need a permit to build a deck on my house?**

Yes. Decks need to be inspected for footing size and depth, girder and joist spans, attachments, and railing requirements.

**I have an existing patio at my house. Can I build a deck on top of it?**

No. A concrete patio is not generally designed to carry the load of the floor. Footings at load points will need to be cut through the slab or slab will have to be removed.

**How deep do my footings have to be?**

Footings must be a minimum 12 inches below grade or until good soil is established. Thickness and width of footing will be determined by the load requirements of the deck. Call RTAC for details.

**Can I use 5/8-inch lag screws for fastening my deck to house and posts?**

No. 5/8-inch hot dipped galvanized through bolts with nut and washer are required.

**How far apart do the pickets on my railings have to be?**

The maximum spacing between pickets is 4 inches.

**How many steps are required before I need a handrail?**

Four or more steps will require a handrail and where the deck or steps is 30 inches or more above grade a guardrail is required. Call RTAC for details.

**How high does a railing have to be?**

Hand railings on stairs are required to be a minimum of 30 inches and maximum of 38 inches and guardrails are a minimum 36 inches high.

**Do I need joist hangers or ledger strip for my joists?**

Yes. A minimum 1-1/2 inch ledger or joist hanger must support joists.

**Can my deck floor system cantilever out over a dropped girder?**

Yes. Consult RTAC or Table R502.3.3 (1) of the NC Residential Code.

**Do I need a permit to build an arbor?**

Depending on the size and its purpose. Call RTAC for details.